Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Canceled)

2.   (Canceled)

3.   (Canceled)

4.   (Canceled)

5.   (Canceled)

6.   (Canceled)

7.   (Canceled)

8.   (Canceled)

9.   (Canceled)

10.   (Canceled)

11.   (Currently Amended) An image reading system ~~as set fort in claim 10~~, comprising:

image reading means for scanning an original image to generate an image data;

storage means for storing said image data; and

image processing means for using a predetermined criterion to merge a plurality of image data to convert said plurality of image data to one image data when said storage means stores said plurality of image data,

wherein when said storage means stores a color low resolution image data and a monochromatic high resolution image data, said image processing means carries out an image

-2-

processing for regarding a pixel of a predetermined threshold or less as a monochromatic pixel in said color low resolution image data to mask said pixel with white, and for replacing said pixel with said monochromatic high resolution image data.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The image reading system as set forth in claim ~~10~~ 11, which further comprises threshold setting means for allowing a user to set ~~said~~ a threshold.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The image reading system as set forth in claim 12, wherein said threshold setting means is provided by a liquid crystal display or a UNIX international (UI) such as Web.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The image reading system as set forth in claim 12, wherein said threshold setting means is an instruction sheet.

15. (Currently Amended) An image reading system ~~as set forth in claim 10~~, comprising:

image reading means for scanning an original image to generate an image data;

storage means for storing said image data; and

image processing means for using a predetermined criterion to merge a plurality of image data to convert said plurality of image data to one image data when said storage means stores said plurality of image data,

wherein when said storage means stores a color low resolution image data and a monochromatic high resolution image data, said image processing means carries out an image processing for regarding a portion of a predetermined evaluation function as a monochromatic portion in said color low resolution image data to mask said portion with white, and for replacing said portion with said monochromatic high resolution image data.

16. (Canceled)

17. (New) A method for reading an image, comprising:

scanning an original image to generate an image data;

storing said image data;

using a predetermined criterion to merge a plurality of image data to convert said plurality of image data to one image data when said plurality of image data are stored;

storing a color low resolution image data and a monochromatic high resolution image data;

carrying out an image processing for regarding a pixel of a predetermined threshold or less as a monochromatic pixel in said color low resolution image data to mask said pixel with white; and

replacing said pixel with said monochromatic high resolution image data.

18. (New) The method for reading an image as set forth in claim 17, which further comprises allowing a user to set a threshold.

19. (New) The method for reading an image as set forth in claim 18, which further comprises providing a liquid crystal display or a UNIX international (UI) such as Web to set the threshold.

20. (New) The method for reading an image as set forth in claim 18, which further comprises an instruction sheet to set the threshold.

21. (New) An image reading system, comprising:

a scanner that scans an original image to generate an image data;

a storage device that stores said image data; and

a processor that uses a predetermined criterion to merge a plurality of image data to convert said plurality of image data to one image data when said storage device stores said plurality of image data,

-4-

wherein when said storage device stores a color low resolution image data and a monochromatic high resolution image data, said processor carries out an image processing for regarding a pixel of a predetermined threshold or less as a monochromatic pixel in said color low resolution image data to mask said pixel with white, and for replacing said pixel with said monochromatic high resolution image data.

22.   (New) The image reading system as set forth in claim 21, which further comprises a control panel that allows a user to set a threshold.

23.   (New) The image reading system as set forth in claim 22, wherein said control panel is provided by a liquid crystal display or a UNIX international (UI) such as Web.

24.   (New) The image reading system as set forth in claim 22, wherein said control panel is an instruction sheet.